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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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Mideast

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Key stories in the media:  
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All media (lead story in The Jerusalem Post) reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and FM Tzipi Livni held a joint press conference Wednesday in Washington. Minister Livni was quoted as saying that any Hamas-led PA would be a "terrorist entity" that should be dealt with harshly by the world. Media quoted Secretary Rice as saying: "There simply has to be a recognition of the State of Israel's right to exist. It simply has to be. Israel is a member of the United Nations. It cannot be that you have a government that does not accept even its right to exist." The Jerusalem Post quoted Secretary Rice as saying in response to reporters' questions that she did not endorse Israel's plans for further unilateral steps in the West Bank. Media quoted Livni as saying she was pleased with the U.S. reaction to the Palestinian Legislative Elections and that "the U.S., as a leader of the free world, stands wholeheartedly behind the demands [of] Hamas." Israel Radio reported that Livni will meet with National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley today, and that President Bush will join them briefly. Israel Radio quoted Israel's Representative to the UN Danny Gillerman as saying that Livni's scheduled meeting today with the representatives of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council is an unprecedented opportunity to present Israel's position to people who will have to deal with the Iranian issue.

All media reported that on Wednesday, a Qassam rocket landed close to a sensitive infrastructure installation near Ashkelon. Major media cited an AP report that the rocket landed close to the Ashkelon power station. In its lead story, Yediot reported that senior officials of the Israeli defense establishment demanded that Israel respond by striking Palestinian power stations.

Ha'aretz reported that Israeli security sources told the newspaper that some elements of the Fatah military wing have recently resumed terrorist activities, following Hamas's victory in the PLC elections. The electronic media reported that before daybreak this morning, three armed Palestinians attacked IDF troops at the Erez checkpoint between Israel and Gaza. The troops returned fire, killing two of the three attackers. No soldiers were reported wounded in the incident. Leading media reported that the Popular Resistance Committees and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claimed joint responsibility for the attack. Israel Radio and the Jerusalem Post's web site cited the suspicion of Israeli security officials that PA police knew of the attack beforehand and did nothing to prevent it. Israel Radio reported on a subsequent attack south of the Erez crossing. The station reported that this morning, shots were fired at police north of Jerusalem, slightly injuring a policewoman, and that a Palestinian was arrested and that another escaped.

Maariv reported that due to Hamas's win in the Palestinian elections, Egypt has decided to remove all its observers and experts from the Gaza Strip. The newspaper quoted King Abdullah II of Jordan as saying recently in private forums that the ascendancy of Hamas and the seizure of control in regional foci of power in the region by extremist Islamists are putting the entire Middle East at risk.

Leading media quoted Khaled Mashal, the head of Hamas's political bureau, as saying in Cairo that Hamas has not abandoned the option of armed struggle. Ha'aretz wrote that Mashal spoke a few hours after the Islamic Jihad leaders convened a press conference during which they attacked Hamas for its change following the elections and its moderate statements.

Yediot cited an annual intelligence assessment report put out by the Israeli Foreign Ministry, according to which international pressure on Iran could cause it to encourage attacks against Israeli or Jewish targets around the world.

All media reported that on Wednesday, 18 parties -- only four of which were represented in the outgoing Knesset -- submitted lists for the Knesset elections to the Central Election Committee. The registration will close tonight at midnight. Hatzofe and Israel Radio reported that National Union and the National Religious Party (NRP) have reached an accord to run on a joint list.

All media reported that on Wednesday, the Knesset plenum voted 37-32 to appoint a parliamentary committee of inquiry into the violent evacuation of the Amona settler outpost, where more than 200 police officers and right-wing protesters were wounded.

Ha'aretz reported that IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz has issued new directives for investigating IDF killings of Palestinian civilians, following the High Court of Justice's examination of the issue. The human rights group B'Tselem had petitioned the court to oblige the IDF to open an inquiry into the death of every Palestinian killed by the army.

Ha'aretz reported that Pierre Collignon, a senior editor of Jyllands-Posten, the Danish newspaper that published cartoons of the prophet Muhammad, told Ha'aretz that Jyllands-Posten has canceled plans to reprint several cartoons dealing with Israel. Leading Israeli media quoted a Jyllands-Posten editor as saying on CNN Wednesday that he would cooperate with the Iranian daily Hamshahri, which announced a competition of cartoons on the Holocaust. However, Ha'aretz wrote that Jyllands-Posten hastened to issue a denial.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, which counsels the Church of England on ethical investment strategies, let the newspaper know on Wednesday that the Church's resolution calling for the sale of the Church's USD 2.2 million in the American firm Caterpillar, whose products are used by Israel in the territories, was "an advisory one only." The Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz reported that Jewish groups, including the World Jewish Congress, blasted the Church's decision. Ha'aretz quoted Labor Party MK Rabbi Michael Melchior as saying that he was surprised by the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, for the decision, which would "only hurt the peace process and the chance for the church to serve as honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Maariv reported that the British government is considering amending legislation that currently allows private citizens to take legal action against Israeli officers who allegedly carried out war crimes. Globes reported that the Tel Aviv-based advertising agency Asvac (phon.), which focuses on the Israeli-Arab sector and the territories, is suing USAID in the Tel Aviv District Court for 541,000 shekels (around USD 115,000) over an alleged breach of contract.

Ha'aretz reported on the new Internet-based visa services offered by the U.S. Embassy in Israel.

According to a Yediot/Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll conducted on Wednesday, Kadima is increasing its edge over other parties (in brackets, results of previous poll.): Kadima would get 43 Knesset seats (42); the Labor Party 20 (21); Likud 15 (15); and Shas 11 (10).

Channel 10-TV and Ha'aretz published the results of a survey conducted Tuesday night by Prof. Camil Fuchs of

the Amanet Group's Dialogue Institute, which Ha'aretz says show that the violent evacuation of Amona and Hamas's victory "have taken a small toll on Acting PM Ehud Olmert and his Kadima party":  
-"Were elections for the Knesset held today, for whom would you vote?" (Results in Knesset seats -- in brackets, results of last week's poll.)  
-Kadima 40 (43); Labor Party 21 (21); Likud 15 (13); Shas 10 (9); Arab parties 9 (10); United Torah Judaism 7 (6); National Union 6 (6); Yisrael Beiteinu 5 (5); Meretz 5 (4); NRP 2 (3).

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Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Washington correspondent Orly Azolai and New York correspondent Eitan Amit wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ... exposed the first difference of opinion between the U.S. administration and the Acting Prime Minister."

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "In a deteriorating situation, there is clearly no choice [for Israel] but to respond more forcefully [to attacks from the Gaza Strip]."

Columnist Avraham Tal wrote in Ha'aretz: "Hamas openly continues [the] line for the extermination of Israel that Arafat tried to hide. The partial compensation is that Israel is not alone in dealing with aggressive fundamentalist Islam."

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in Yediot Aharonot: "Paradoxically enough, Israel's situation is far better than that of the Europeans insofar as concerns political Islam."

Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Israel, the U.S. and Europe have to calm the hell down.... [Otherwise,] the doomsday predictions about the new Palestine could turn into self-fulfilling prophecies."

Block Quotes:  
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I. "First Difference of Opinion Between Olmert and Washington"

Washington correspondent Orly Azolai and New York correspondent Eitan Amit wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (February 9): "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice responded last night for the first time to Ehud Olmert's political plan, and exposed the first difference of opinion between the U.S. administration and the Acting Prime Minister. Permanent borders will be established in negotiations between the parties over the final status, said Rice in response to Olmert's statements that Israel would have to part with the Palestinians and fashion its borders on its own. We are opposed to unilateral steps, said Rice at the end of her meeting with Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. With that having been said, the Secretary of State reiterated President Bush's commitment to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that in the final status arrangement the new realities on the ground would have to be taken into account, namely, the settlement blocs that would remain in Israeli possession."

II. "Turn Up the Heat"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (February 9): "A look at the steps Israel has taken so far against the Qassam rockets makes clear that it will soon have to decide to escalate its responses. Israel will certainly put this off until the nature of the new government in the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas's place in it, is revealed. A successful targeted killing in Gaza or Khan Yunis and a massive artillery barrage on empty areas in the northern Gaza Strip do not give a full response to the launching of Qassam rockets on targets considered

strategic in the Ashkelon area, or on Negev communities like Sderot. In a deteriorating situation, there is clearly no choice but to respond more forcefully, whether by firing on populated areas, by inserting military forces into the northern Gaza Strip, or by cutting off the electricity."

### III. "We Are Not Alone In This Struggle"

Columnist Avraham Tal wrote in Ha'aretz (February 9): "We are back to the 1960s, when the late [Israeli] Orientalist, Yehoshafat Harkaby, analyzed the trends for the extermination of Israel in the Palestinian liberation movement, trends that included unequivocal anti-Semitic tones. Hamas openly continues that line for the extermination of Israel that Arafat tried to hide. The partial compensation is that Israel is not alone in dealing with aggressive fundamentalist Islam. It's now being made tangible to European countries -- by the street rioting and the torching of embassies -- that their culture and the lives of their citizenry are in real danger."

### IV. "The Conflict Is Migrating to Europe"

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in Yediot Aharonot (February 9): "Until the explosion, pun intended, of the cartoon scandal in Europe, conventional wisdom posited that when it comes to Islam and the clash of cultures, the Middle East was responsible for producing and Europe merely responded. It was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that created the shockwaves that became sensible as far away as in France, for instance. Now, however, a shift of historic proportions is occurring right in front of our very eyes.... The heart of the conflict is migrating to Paris and Copenhagen.... No one can bury their head in the sand any longer and blame Israel, as the Europeans tried to do at the 2001 Durban conference, hoping that the Islamic tiger would devour Israel and not them.... The border between the two countries [Israel and the future Palestinian state] will mark the line between the first world and the third world, with all the political, religious and social conflicts that go hand in hand with that. The rise of Hamas to power and the cultural conflagration in Europe evince the advantages of disengagement-- be it unilateral or through agreement, it makes no difference. In that sense, the existence of a Palestinian state is one of Israel's most important interests nowadays, against the backdrop of the world order that is changing before our very eyes.... And so, paradoxically enough, Israel's situation is far better than that of the Europeans insofar as concerns political Islam."

### V. "Panicking Over Palestine"

Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (February 9): "Between war and peace there's a lot of ground, and that is the ground Israel should be exploring with the PA once Hamas moves in. In diplomatic terms, Israel should downgrade its relations with the PA slightly, more in style than substance. There's not much to downgrade, anyway; Israel may have formally recognized the PA under Fatah, but the IDF has done most of the government's talking since the Intifada ended the peace process. I don't see any reason why this shaky but tolerable status quo can't be maintained with Hamas.... And above all, Israel, the U.S. and Europe have to calm the hell down. They have to stop threatening to lay siege to the West Bank and Gaza, to try forcing Hamas into submission, to punish the Palestinians for rejecting democracy, Fatah-style. It's going to backfire. And if that happens, the doomsday predictions about the new Palestine could turn into self-fulfilling prophecies."

JONES